

Message Text

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PAGE 01 REYKJA 00986 290255Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /084 W
-----012125 292256Z /70

R 281552Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8598
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY OSLO
USMISSION IATO
COMICEDEFOR KEFLAVIK IC
CINCLANT NORFOLK VA
CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IC
SUBJECT: MAJOR INDEPENDENCE PARTY MEETING FAILS TO RECONCILE
DIFFERENCES

1. INDEPENDENCE PARTY (IP) HELD MEETING JULY 26 TO AIR AND
POSSIBLY RECONCILE POLICY AND PERSONAL DIFFERENCES THAT
HAVE CAUSED STRAINS WITHIN IP IN RECENT MONTHS. MEETING WAS
WELL ATTENDED BUT DID NOT FULFILL HOPES. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS
OPPORTUNITY FOR QUESTIONS, FORMAL SPEECHES AND PANEL DISCUSSION
WERE SEEN BY SOME IP MEMBERS AS CONSTRAINTS AND ANOTHER
INDICATION THAT PARTY LEADERSHIP TRYING TO KEEP MEMBERS
UNDER THEIR CONTROL. MEMBERS WHO HAD HOPED TO VENT THEIR SPLEEN
WERE DISAPPOINTED AND SOME PARTY MEMBERS OF LONG STANDING,
ANGERED BY SESSION WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN TOO WELL-ORCHESTRATED,
BOLTED FROM MEETING AND DECLARED THAT THEY WERE ABANDONING
PARTY.

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2. REYKJAVIK'S FORMER MAYOR BIRGIR ISLEIFUR
GUNNARSSON WHO REMAINS POPULAR FIGURE DESPITE ELECTORAL
SETBACK FACED BY IP IN MAY MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. GUNNARSSON
RECEIVED STRONG SUPPORT WHEN HE DECLARED THAT THERE MAY BE
NEED FOR CHANGES IN PARTY LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE BUT IF AND WHEN
CHANGES ARE MADE, IT WILL BE INCUMBENT UPON ALL INDEPENDENTS
TO UNITE AND GIVE LEADERSHIP FULL SUPPORT.

3.

BECAUSE OF PROBLEMS WITHIN PARTY THAT HAVE BEEN EVIDENT FOR SOME TIME (77 REYKJAVIK 1680 NOTAL), THERE HAS BEEN TALK WITHIN IP OF CALLING NATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THIS FALL RATHER THAN SCHEDULED TIME OF SPRING 1979. THIS MOVE IS SUPPORTED BY THORODDSEN AND GUDMUNDSSON BUT IS OPPOSED BY HALLGRIMSSON WHO PERHAPS FEARS THAT CONVENTION COULD GET OUT OF CONTROL. CHAIRMAN MAY ALSO BE CONCERNED THAT IF INDEPENDENTS DO NOT HAVE MORE TIME TO COOL OFF AFTER SHARP DEFEAT IN NATIONAL ELECTION LAST MONTH, HIS POSITION MAY BE IN JEOPARDY. EARLY CONVENTION DOES NOT APPEAR LIKELY AT MOMENT AND IN ANY CASE, HALLGRIMSSON'S CHAIRMANSHIP MAY JUST BE SAFE BY VIRTUE OF FACT THAT THERE IS NO INDEPENDENT CURRENTLY ON SCENE WHO COULD UNITE PARTY BEHIND HIM.

4. COMMENT: PARTY' S PROBLEMS DO NOT EXTEND TO ITS CONTINUING COMMITMENT TO NATO DEFENSE AND MAINTENANCE OF ICELAND DEFENSE FORCE(IDF). (ONLY BASE-RELATED QUESTION RAISED AT JULY 26 MEETING WAS POSSIBILITY OF IDF USING LOCAL CURRENCY RATHER THAN DOLLARS TO WHICH HALLGRIMSSON GAVE NON-COMMITTAL RESPONSE.) NONETHELESS, PERSISTENCE OF ANY LONG-TERM DIVISIONS WITHIN NATION' S LARGEST AND MOST STRONGLY PRO-NATO PARTY IS DISTURBING.
BLAKE

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Message Attributes

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TAGS: PINT, IC
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